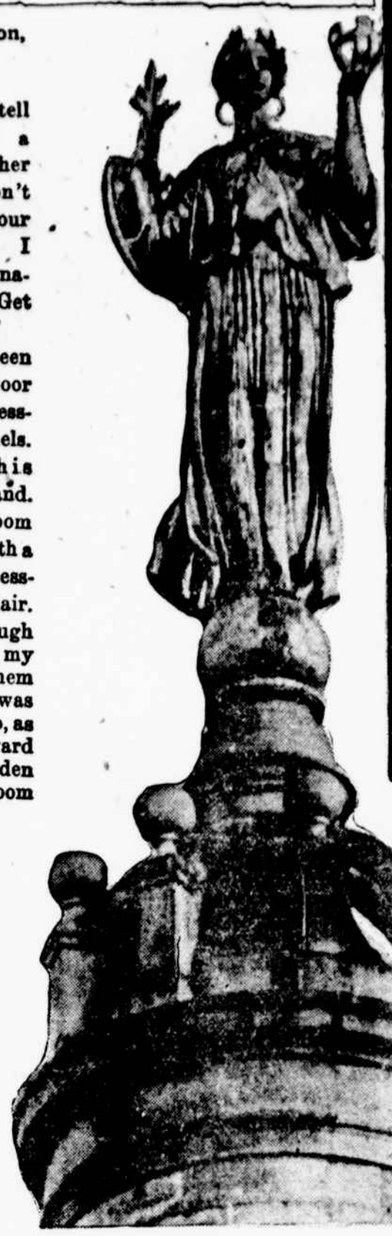
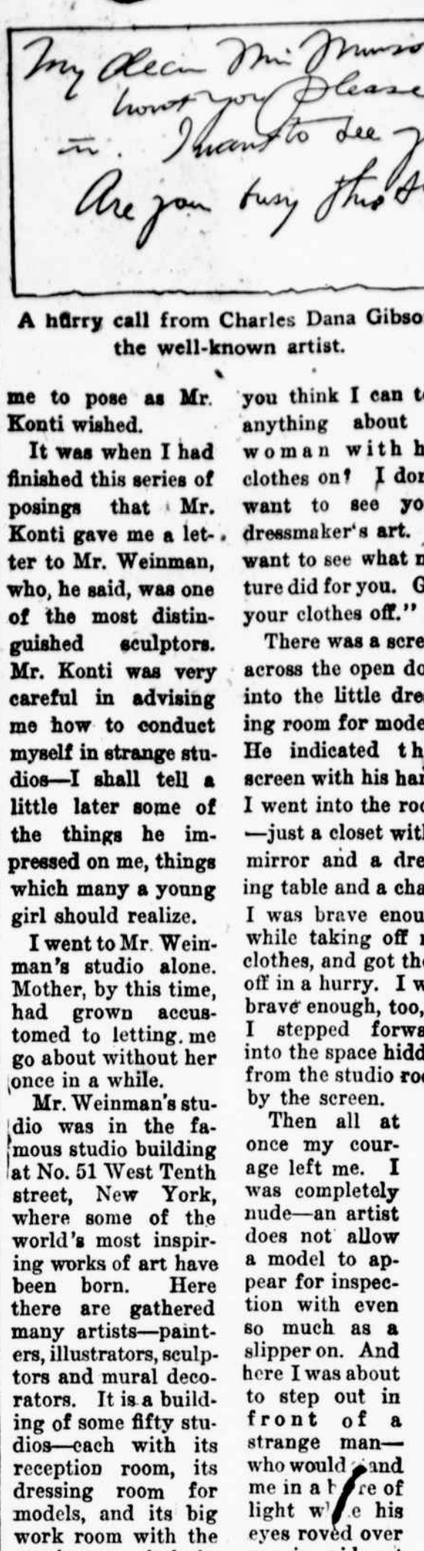
Artists' Studios"

d for this famous painting by
ler, B. P.



"Civic Fame," by Adolph A. Weinman, which is cast in copper twenty feet tall and now stands on top of the great Municipal Building in New York. Miss Munson was the model for this statute, which won the prize among many competitors.

Audrey Munson in an enormous tapestry by Herter in George Vanderbilt's country home at Biltmore, N. C. Miss Munson posed for both female figures.



My dear Mr Munson
won't you please call me up or stop in. I want to see you about posing?
Are you busy this Sunday morning?
Sincerely yours
C. D. Gibson

A hurry call from Charles Dana Gibson, the well-known artist.

me to pose as Mr. Konti wished.

It was when I had finished this series of posings that Mr. Konti gave me a letter to Mr. Weinman, who, he said, was one of the most distinguished sculptors. Mr. Konti was very careful in advising me how to conduct myself in strange studios—I shall tell a little later some of the things he impressed on me, things which many a young girl should realize.

I went to Mr. Weinman's studio alone. Mother, by this time, had grown accustomed to letting me go about without her once in a while.

Mr. Weinman's studio was in the famous studio building at No. 51 West Tenth street, New York, where some of the world's most inspiring works of art have been born. Here there are gathered many artists—painters, illustrators, sculptors and mural decorators. It is a building of some fifty studios—each with its reception room, its dressing room for models, and its big work room with the precious north light shining through great window panes. The halls are dark and dingy; the studios are barren and cheerless—for these are not the kind of studios I shall tell of elsewhere, where pseudo artists set themselves amidst an atmosphere of Oriental luxury, with soft rugs and costly draperies, and think, because they surround themselves with bizarre and Babylonian settings, they are "artistic." They are the studios where great men work hard and care little for the atmosphere in which they work.

I was a bit timid as I knocked on Mr. Weinman's door. This was the first time I had gone on my own account to apply for work as a model.

A kindly man came to the door—a man with a long linen duster on, no collar or tie, his hair rumpled and great splashes of dust and clay over his clothes. I thought he must be a janitor.

"I wish to see Mr. Weinman," I said.

"Come in; I am Mr. Weinman. What can I do for you?"

I was surprised. I gulped hard, and not being able to find my voice I mutely handed him the letter from Mr Konti.

He read the note and asked me to sit down.

"Well, let's see. You are a young girl, aren't you? How much experience have you had?"

I told him I had posed but once or twice.

"Well, you look as if you should pose all the time. You are quite Grecian—and yet you seem to have the warmth of emotion the modern public likes to see in its models. If you have posed for Konti you must be excellent. I might use you. I want a model for some work I am finishing now. Let's see what you look like."

I was quite happy. I proceeded to let him see what I looked like. I went into the north light from the window and stood still, turned about and then walked a bit. Then I looked at him to get his verdict.

"I said let's see what you look like," he repeated.

I was puzzled. I had turned and walked and stood still. I looked at him so uncertainly he must have seen I did not understand.

"Don't you see what I mean?" he said brusquely. "Do you think I can tell anything about a woman with her clothes on? I don't want to see your dressmaker's art. I want to see what nature did for you. Get your clothes off."

There was a screen across the open door into the little dressing room for models. He indicated this screen with his hand. I went into the room—just a closet with a mirror and a dressing table and a chair. I was brave enough while taking off my clothes, and got them off in a hurry. I was brave enough, too, as I stepped forward into the space hidden from the studio room by the screen.

Then all at once my courage left me. I was completely nude—an artist does not allow a model to appear for inspection with even so much as a slipper on. And here I was about to step out in front of a strange man—who would stand me in a blaze of light while his eyes roved over me in silent criticism.

I started to step out from behind the screen. My nerve gave way, and I trembled and stepped back again quickly. Twice I nerved myself to the task, and each time my feet failed me—I didn't think I could do it.

Mr. Weinman became impatient. "Come, hurry up; I haven't time to waste, you know."

He was very brusque, although I learned afterward he was very gentle and kind at heart.

I tossed up my head, squared my shoulders, bit my lip and decided to "brazen it out." After all, I argued, I am just a model, just so many pounds of flesh and blood. He will not be scanning Audrey, the girl—but just a girl, the model.

One bare foot stepped out boldly. Then I wilted again, but it was too late. That one foot was outside the screen and he had seen that I was coming. I had to go on. But all my daring and firmness and poise was gone. I could only bring my other foot up to where my first one was—which brought me clear outside the screen. And there I stood, ashamed and afraid, my head hanging down and my hands clasped nervously in front of me.

Almost as soon as I was clear of the screen, and while I was waiting and trembling, my head hanging, my hands burning me where they pressed against my body, he called out excitedly:

"There—stop—just as you are—hold that now. Put up your hands—slowly—don't move the rest of your body—get the hands up—over your head as if you were fixing your hair—there—never saw anything like it. Hold it. Don't budge!"

He flung out the quick, staccato-like commands like the shots from a pistol, but there was that in his tone that stirred me. It was approval, interest, eagerness—something appreciative I had inspired in him. I waited, breathlessly, holding the pose.

Mr. Weinman rushed to his easel and pulled it unceremoniously into a light directly in front of me. With quick, jerky strokes of his charcoal he began to sketch on a big piece of paper.

Every minute or so he would draw back, look at what he had drawn, and give vent to a half-muttered exclamation. "That's it. Good" or "No—not that. That's not the hip line. The leg's out more than that."

I was so "on my nerves" that his every muttered exclamation tingled through me. It did not occur to me that after all he was just sketching and that whatever he drew it must later be translated in marble—that he was just fixing his impression of me on paper to study over and idealize before he should begin to work in clay from the model herself.

Audrey Munson as an angel in a stained glass church window by J. and R. Lamb, makers of art and memorial windows.

It seemed like an eternity—it was really about thirty minutes—I stood there, not a muscle moving, not even my eyes wandering. My arms began to ache, my legs to waver. He saw it almost instantly. Throwing down his charcoal and springing up from his chair he came over to me.

"There, there; I am so sorry," he said, his voice resonant with sympathy and apology. "Forgive me for keeping you in position so long. I was so interested I forgot. But you gave me an idea—a great idea—that pose of yours. It was splendid—so natural. Come, look."

I forgot I was naked. Feverish with curiosity I ran over to look at the drawing on the easel. It was just a rough—it seemed to me awfully crude—sketch of a girl's body, drooping and modest, and yet seemingly unafraid and fearless. Her upraised hands seemed to be carrying a burden, heavy, yet without weight; the body was beautiful, graceful and yet fragile. I saw in it a vague resemblance to myself, but I could not imagine I could have been so dainty and graceful in my unconscious pose of bashfulness.

"Can that be me—what you saw in me?" I exclaimed.

"Every line of it. It was a great idea. Don't know where you got the thought, but we'll do it. You looked like night coming down out of the sky. There—that's the very title! We'll call it 'Descending Night.' Come tomorrow at nine. We'll have it all planned out and get down to work. I'll let everything else go."

And "Descending Night" grew into a wonderful thing of grace and marble and won for the sculptor a highly prized medal and was bought for the city of New York by its Metropolitan Museum!

Suddenly, while I was standing before the easel looking at the drawing and trying to see how the artist had found night descending in my pose, I realized what state I was in—without a drape around me, standing and talking to this strange man in that condition, just as if I were covered with my street clothes and talking to him in my own home.

All my sense of modesty came back to me at once. And all through my years as the "queen of the studios" this same feeling came to me the instant an artist said, after a pose, "Now you may rest a while." In position, holding a pose while a sculptor or painter worked, I thought of myself only as a model—a mere piece of human flesh. The moment the artist dropped his brush or mallet or modeling tool I became the human young woman again, ashamed to have my body seen. As this feeling came to me then I rushed behind the screen, blushing furiously, and got into my clothes.

As I left the studio that morning, happy now in the thought that I was to have more work at once, I wondered what it was the artist saw in my unconscious pose—the draping of my body—which inspired him with such a beautiful idea as that of the night coming down out of the sky to settle upon the world below, and how he had seen in me the suggestion that night was such a beautiful, maidenly thing that only the pure lines of a woman's form could best interpret it. Afterward I learned many things about the artists' points of view in association with the feminine form which those who are not familiar with the studios possibly never have thought of. I learned to see in the female body hidden beauties which few but the trained artistic mind can detect.

I learned, for instance, in the studio of one of the most gifted judges of female beauty in the world, why artists would not allow me to wear shoes with the high French heels; why I was not permitted, even, to have the dainty high-heeled "mules" I liked to wear about my bedroom at home, and which are so popular with women to-day.

And I learned, too, of the eternal search by artists, beginning in the time of the ancient Greeks, for two little dimples nestling in the flesh of the back just over the hips, and why, when it was seen that these two dimples were pressed by a kind nature into my back they proved to be as valuable to me as Government bonds. Dimples, I had always thought, were the beauty marks of the girl who could bring them into play at the corners of her mouth when she smiled. I had none of these. But I discovered that the best dimples of all, rarest and the most beautiful according to the sculptor and painter, are those hidden where none can see and which so few women possess.

And I learned that the greatest of foes to feminine beauty are the kind of garters most women wear—the garter that holds the stocking from the corset or from a belt at the waist; and why so few young women of today know what to do with their hands, how to carry them or how to use them in company because their clothes are in the way. And, too, I learned and saw some of the tragedies that come to women whose beauty is their misfortune, and of the strange craving so many wealthy women have to see themselves depicted, in canvas or marble or bronze, in the "altogether." Of these things I shall tell more from Sunday to Sunday on these pages.

(To be Continued Next Sunday)